

Love™

SUSPENSE

RIVETING INSPIRATIONAL ROMANCE

OUT ON A LIMB



RACHELLE
McCALLA

Dear Reader,

Cutch and Elise's story makes me feel homesick for southwest Iowa and all the warmhearted people who live there. The Loess Hills are a real place, as is the Nishnabotna River, though Holyoake, Iowa, is a figment of my imagination, based loosely on my husband's hometown of Clarinda and its sister city, Shenandoah. Though Holyoake is fictional, it still feels like home.

Likewise, the characters in this story feel very real to me. Misunderstandings and hurt feelings caused a rift between the McCutcheons and the McAlisters—a rift that only God's love can ultimately overcome. Though the feud between them is a bitter one, it's rooted in honest, loving feelings, as one generation has tried to protect the next from suffering through the hurts and broken hearts that sometimes go along with life.

I hope you've enjoyed your visit to Holyoake County, and I pray you'll join me there again as some of the characters we've come to love find happy endings of their own. Please visit my website at www.rachellemccalla.com for recipes, character updates and exciting news about forthcoming stories.

God bless you, and thanks for reading this book!

Rachelle McCalla

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As Elise's glider is shot down, she prays that God will help her escape from her enemies. Do you believe God answered her prayers? How?
2. Cutch is particularly distressed to discover someone has been producing meth on his property. Why does he feel so strongly about this issue? Have you ever felt more passionately about an issue because of personal experience or a loved one's experience?
3. Elise's father and Uncle Leroy are very protective of her. What are the advantages and disadvantages of their behavior? Have you ever felt someone was being overprotective toward you? Have you ever been overprotective toward someone else?
4. Though Cutch wants to investigate the tank he saw from the sky, he chooses to help Elise first, only to discover the tank has been moved while he was helping her. Have you ever felt you'd lost out on something important by helping a friend? How did you deal with your feelings? What did you ultimately gain through your sacrifice?
5. Cutch is a secretive person by nature and often gives Elise an evasive answer when she asks him a question, especially toward the start of their adventure. How is her ability to trust him influenced by his unwillingness to share? When he begins to open up, how does

Elise respond? Have you ever known someone who was secretive? How did their behavior impact your relationship with them?

- 6. Though Elise still feels strongly attracted to Cutch, she refuses to let on to him about her true feelings. Why? How is her silence helpful? How is it harmful?**
- 7. Elise feels abandoned by her mother and thinks she's unlovable. Because of her mother's rejection, Elise feels certain Cutch will always reject her as well. Do her feelings make sense to you? Have you ever transferred a feeling—either rejection, criticism or approval from one person to another? How have these transferred emotions hindered your relationships? How can you overcome that?**
- 8. When Pastor Carmichael preaches about loving enemies, Elise listens to his message while coming up with excuses in her mind for why she shouldn't do what the Bible says. Have you ever done something similar? Was Elise best served by following her ideas of what was right or by following the Bible's instructions? What is God calling you to do?**
- 9. Cutch's grandfather planted his pecan trees too close together for them to be fruitful. Though Cutch has pruned them to make them more productive, they'll never yield what they could have if they'd been correctly planted initially. How are our lives like the pecan trees? What decisions have you made that have made your life less fruitful? What have you had to prune? Can you think of any Bible passages that relate our lives to bearing trees?**

10. Cutch reflects on the Bible's promise that the truth will set a person free. He fears the sheriff's investigation will do the opposite for him. In what ways are his fears realized? In what ways does the whole truth finally set him free? Have you ever found yourself waiting for the whole truth to set you free? What does that promise from the Bible really mean (see John 8:32; 14.6)?
11. When Elise revisits the Bible passage from Luke 6:27-31, she realizes God calls her to love, even if she isn't loved in return. How does this realization change Elise's attitude toward Cutch? How does it free her from her fears? Is there someone difficult in your life who God is calling you to love?
12. When Elise's father explains the history between the feuding families, Elise realizes much of her anger toward Cutch was brought on by things that had happened long ago—in some cases, before she was even born. How do things that happened long ago influence the way you treat others? Can you think of historical or biblical examples of this dynamic? What long-held grudges can you overcome today?
13. Both the McCutcheons and McAlisters are God-loving people who are active in church, who pray and read their Bibles regularly. Yet they still maintain an ugly feud that generates bitterness and hatred between their families. Do you think this is believable? How does it challenge the assumption that Christians are supposed to lead perfect lives? Is there any ugliness in your heart that you need to confess and be forgiven for

today? How does this make you feel more sympathetic toward other “hypocritical” Christians?

14. Given all the evidence that’s stacked against Cutch, Elise feels like she’s going out on a limb to trust him. Do you think her decisions were wise? What might you have done differently?
15. Throughout the book, Cutch and Elise often note that God has been watching out for them, helping them to escape from the bad guys, no matter how close they’ve come to getting caught. How does this correspond with your own experience of God’s protection? What can you do today to trust Christ more?

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to enjoy a sneak peek from
the Love Inspired® inspirational series.

*See below for a sneak peek at
our inspirational line, Love Inspired®.
Introducing HIS HOLIDAY BRIDE
by bestselling author Jillian Hart*

Autumn Granger gave her horse rein to slide toward the town's new sheriff.

"Hey, there." The man in a brand-new Stetson, black T-shirt, jeans and riding boots held up a hand in greeting. He stepped away from his four-wheel drive with "Sheriff" in black on the doors and waded through the grasses. "I'm new around here."

"I'm Autumn Granger."

"Nice to meet you, Miss Granger. I'm Ford Sherman, from Chicago." He knuckled back his hat, revealing the most handsome face she'd ever seen. Big blue eyes contrasted with his sun-tanned complexion.

"I'm guessing you haven't seen much open land. Out here, you've got to keep an eye on cows or they're going to tear your vehicle apart."

"What?" He whipped around. Sure enough, mammoth black-and-white creatures had started to gnaw on his four-wheel drive. They clustered like a mob, mouths and tongues and teeth bent on destruction. One cow tried to pry the wiper off the windshield, another chewed on the side mirror. Several leaned through the open window, licking the seats.

"Move along, little dogie." He didn't know the first thing about cattle.

The entire herd swiveled their heads to study him curiously. Not a single hoof shifted. The animals soon returned to chewing, licking, digging through his possessions.

Autumn laughed, a warm and wonderful sound. "Thanks,

I needed that.” She then pulled a bag from behind her saddle and waved it at the cows. “Look what I have, guys. Cookies.”

Cows swung in her direction, and dozens of liquid brown eyes brightened with cookie hopes. As she circled the car, the cattle bounded after her. The earth shook with the force of their powerful hooves.

“Next time, you’re on your own, city boy.” She tipped her hat. The cowgirl stayed on his mind, the sweetest thing he had ever seen.

*Will Ford be able to stick it out in the country
to find out more about Autumn?
Find out in HIS HOLIDAY BRIDE
by bestselling author Jillian Hart,
available in October 2010
only from Love Inspired®.*

FROM #1 NEW YORK TIMES
AND USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
DEBBIE MACOMBER

Mrs. Miracle on 34th Street...

This Christmas, Emily Merkle (just call her Mrs. Miracle) is working in the toy department at Finley's, the last family-owned department store in Manhattan.

Her boss (who happens to be the owner's son) has placed an order for a large number of high-priced robots, which he hopes will give the business a much-needed boost. In fact, Jake Finley's counting on it.

Holly Larson is counting on that robot, too. She's been looking after her eight-year-old nephew, Gabe, ever since her widowed brother was deployed overseas. Holly plans to buy Gabe a robot—which she can't afford—because she's determined to make Christmas special.

But this Christmas will be different—thanks to Mrs. Miracle. Next to bringing children joy, her favorite activity is giving romance a nudge. Fortunately, Jake and Holly are receptive to her "hints." And thanks to Mrs. Miracle, Christmas takes on new meaning for Jake. For all of them!

Call Me Mrs. Miracle

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"This isn't as bad at it looks." His hand slid down her arm to her hand.

Her eyes followed the shiver that ran down her arm at his touch, and settled on the place where his strong calloused hand covered hers. Her heart gave another gasp. "Somebody tried to kill me, Cutch. From *your* land. And now you're trying to stop me from calling the sheriff? I don't think so." She jerked her arm away and looked at him with begging eyes, wanting him to explain, wanting him to say something that would make everything right.

But he hadn't been able to do that eight years ago, and she doubted he could do it now. She knew better than to spend even one more second getting any closer to him than she already was.

Books by Rachelle McCalla

Love Inspired Suspense

Survival Instinct

Troubled Waters

Out on a Limb

RACHELLE McCALLA

is a mild-mannered housewife, and the toughest she ever has to get is when she's trying to keep her four kids quiet in church. Though she often gets in over her head, as her characters do, and has to find a way out, her adventures have more to do with sorting out the carpool and providing food for the potluck. She's never been arrested, gotten in a fistfight or been shot at. And she'd like to keep it that way! For recipes, fun background notes on the places and characters in this book and more information on forthcoming titles, visit www.rachellemccalla.com.

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RACHELLE
McCALLA



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Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those
who mistreat you...Do to others as you
would have them do to you.

—*Luke 6:27–31*

